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both a psychological and a ritual necessity. Notwithstanding this preference for sons, in actual practice no discrimination is observed in the treatment of children on the grounds of their sex.

As a rule infants are treated with affection. Until a child is four or five years old, it is mainly a responsibility of the mother. The mother nurses it whenever it starts crying indicating its desire to be fed. The child sleeps with its mother in the night and is at liberty to suck whenever it likes. Feeding of the child is primarily the mother's duty. However, when it is six to eight months old, elder sisters, female relations and male members of the household may start sharing this task with her by occasionally giving solid food to the child. While other relations give some food to the child occasionally, its attachment to the mother does not diminish in any significant way, as it is breast-fed by her until it is four or five years old. In teaching the child regular habits of sphincter control, standing, walking and speaking the mother's share is very considerable.

On the whole, an infant is the cause of delight to the family, and it is often fondled and carried about by the elders. They all invariably make funny faces and peculiar noises to make the baby smile, fondle it in many different ways, and find great enjoyment in imitating its meaningless sounds.

The situation radically changes after the child reaches the age of five or six years. Now the parents must be strong and should start disciplining it. At this stage the child finds the father an authoritarian figure and begins to fear him. The liberty that he was allowed during his early childhood is increasingly curtailed. Now the accent is on good behaviour and regular habits. The child is more frequently spanked for being troublesome. Absorbed in the care of a younger baby, the mother may often have to leave the elder child to spend most of his time in his own way. During the day-time he mostly plays out of doors with other children of his age-group. As he grows older the discipline becomes more and more difficult. At first he was punished for being 'troublesome' or for 'crying without reason', but now he has to distinguish clearly between things to be done and things not to be done. The child must be very particular about the latter. These include mostly urinating and defecating inside the house, demanding food and money at odd times too often, beating younger brothers and sisters, stealing, lying and using foul language. As a general rule, the

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961 855 lighter punishments are administered by the mother, who deals with the minor faults and offences of her children. All serious offences and persistent defiance of the mother's authority are reported by her to the father. Very often the mother's threat that she would report the matter to the father is enough to set the recalcitrant children right. In point of fact, many mothers build up the father as a figure to be feared, and in some instances the children actually tremble when they are produced before him for disobedience and other improper conduct. The punishments inflicted by the father on his children are less frequent but more severe. But from the above it should not be surmised that the children's attitude towards the father is only that of fear, for that would obviously be wrong. Fear and respect there certainly are, but not without a definite feeling of confidence and friendship for him. While difficulties are more often referred to and help sought from the mother, the father is not unapproachable, and indeed many fathers teach their children new games, make them small playthings, occasionally take them out for sight-seeing, buy them sweets and other tit-bits, and on demand give them a little money too.

813 768 During later childhood and adolescence the girls draw themselves closer and closer to the mother and occupy themselves mainly with feminine pursuits. The boys continue to maintain close and intimate relations with the mother, but her authority over them gradually diminishes. They learn to coax and cajole her. They know her weaknesses and devise ingenious ways to tease her. She often threatens to bring matters to the notice of the father, but the boys know very well that in all probability the threat will not be carried out. But during this period the father watches the development of his sons with greater interest and when complaints are brought to him the punishment is often exemplary. Traditionally this is believed to be the period when 'boys go tough' and are difficult to manage, and it is during this phase that the father must exercise tact and firmness in keeping them under control. They must keep the right sort of company, and should not be allowed to spend all their time playing and planning mischief. Even if they go to the village school, they should give some time to their traditional caste occupations. By assisting their elders and seeing them at work they should be able to acquire the fundamentals of what in all likelihood is going to be their main vocation

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606 brothers the daughter-in-law has terms of privileged familiarity,
607 and while they are not expected to cross certain limits, tradition permits them to indulge in joke and banter. Unmarried brothers-in-law provide sympathy and friendship to the harassed wife, but when they grow up they too are drawn to their wives, and the former ties of intimacy are gradually forgotten in the humdrum realities of life.

SIBLINGS

573 Social ideals demand that there should be solidarity between siblings, especially between brothers, and that they should 'love and help' one another. The older brothers and sisters, particularly the latter, must share the responsibility of looking after the younger ones with their mother. In actual practice up to the age of six or seven they are constant companions; later the sisters gradually become absorbed in feminine pursuits and are thus unable to participate as freely in the children's games as they did before, and the boys too develop greater interest in their respective play-groups. Thus, to begin with, the inter-personal relations between the siblings are closest in their early childhood, but later they develop on their own lines, and distance between the sexes increases gradually.

The older siblings can claim some 'authority' over the younger ones. When the mother is otherwise occupied or is ill, the older siblings have to look after and care for the younger brothers and sisters. Particularly the older sisters have to lend a helping hand to the mother, and very often children become so much attached to them that they come to regard them as substitutes for the mother. While siblings of more or less the same age-group have to 'help, support and defend' one another, in their dealings with the other village children, the older ones must keep an eye on the doings of their younger brothers and sisters and bring their faults to
[861] the notice of the parents. The older siblings can occasionally spank the younger ones under their charge, but they must not do it too often. In return for the limited authority which they enjoy, they have to make some concessions. When a younger sibling starts crying for something, it is expected that an older brother or sister should forgo his own share to appease him. 'He is younger; he does not understand it, but you are older and understand everything. Let him have the thing. After all, he is your brother',

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shows signs of digesting these well, siblings and other members of the family begin giving bits of food to pacify the baby when it starts crying. During this stage people love to handle the child, and there is very considerable fondling and play. No effort is made to establish sphincter control in the child at this point. Every possible help is given to the child to learn to stand and walk. While people take great delight in imitating the sounds made by the child, efforts are also made to teach him to talk. Words for grandfather, grandmother, father, mother, uncles and aunts, brothers and sisters are generally the first to be taught. In a state of mental agitation and worry the mother may occasionally spank the child; but this is definitely disapproved and when detected the mother is always reproached by the elders for doing so.

With some modifications this continues even during the early childhood, up to the age of about three. When the child learns to walk it is carried about less by the elders. Now and then it may be left to play by itself in the backyard or in the lane in front of the house. Help in its learning processes continues to be given, and elders indulge in considerable fondling of the child. Weaning is not attempted unless necessitated by the mother's pregnancy or by the 'drying up of her breasts'. Attempts at toilet training are made at this stage. When the child wakes up in the morning the mother seats it on the hollow made by joining her feet and keeps on making a hissing sound which is believed to induce a child to ease itself. Now and then the child is taken to a corner, the cloth covering its genital organs is removed, and the hissing sound is made to make it urinate. If the child wets or soils its clothes at this stage the mother or a sibling will say, '*Chhi*, you are dirty'. But this is done with a smile and there is hardly any reproach in the remark.

When boys are seen manipulating their organs the elders smile and playfully remove their hands from them. Boys invariably start doing so again, and are not admonished. This amuses rather than irritates the older members of the family. While the sex experience of the children is confined wholly to their manipulation of genital organs, their sex knowledge is considerably wider. Sharing the same room with their parents, they have frequent opportunities of watching them engaged in the coital act. Even at the age of three the vocabulary of several children includes the words for penis, vagina and copulation.

LIVING TOGETHER

515 Sponging children with warm water is now often replaced by two or three cold baths per week; the frequency being more among the Brahmins and Komtis and less among the Muslims and the
861 untouchables. The elders practise considerable deception in their dealings with the children. Efforts at disciplining them tend to be rather erratic; and extremes of affection and strictures are by no means uncommon. Jealousies between siblings may be induced by members of the family who take delight in watching the irritation, anger and aggressiveness of little children. Tantrums during this stage are frequent. The methods commonly employed to pacify the child are: distracting it by making funny noises, rocking it in a cradle, offering it food or milk, scolding it loudly, threatening it, and finally boxing its ears and spanking it.

855 Later childhood begins at about five and continues until the advent of adolescence. At this stage the children form their own
[857] play-groups; spending several hours of the day in their respective age-groups. Now they are free to play in the streets and the open
[866] ground outside the village. Maternal attention is now considerably reduced; the elders keep an eye on them, but apart from this they have considerable freedom. As they grow older solicitation of affectionate responses through handling, play and fondling gradu-
[863] ally diminishes. Toilet training becomes strict, and the child is expected to have full control over defecation and urination. Cleanliness is insisted upon, and any failure on his part in this respect arouses anger in the elders. The erring child is ridiculed,
[864] chastised and punished. Now they must wear clothes and begin to learn to hide their genitals. If the elders find their organs exposed they point to them and ask, '*Arre*, what is that? Why are you exhibiting that little thing?' Children often develop a sense of shame at this stage, blush at such remarks, hide their organs and
511 run away from the elders. Discipline becomes more rigorous and physical punishment is more frequent. Rewards for good behaviour include praise, partiality and favoured treatment on the part of the parents, larger share of food and small gifts of money. Punishments, on the other hand, include rebukes and threats, ridicule, threats to report the matter to the father, spanking and occasionally denial of food or playing things or even locking up in a solitary room. Considerable dishonesty is practised by elders in their dealings with children, which is often detected by the latter and angers them all the more.